

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An automated security and reorder system for items maintained within a boundary, each item having an associated transponder, each transponder being configured to transmit item identification data for indicating a secured status and a consumable status of the associated item, the system comprising:

10 a transponder communications device configured to electrically interrogate a transponder associated with an item maintained within the boundary and to receive item identification data in response;

15 a controller disposed in operable communication with the transponder communications device, the controller being configured to generate an alert signal in response to detection of a given transponder having crossed the boundary and having item identification data indicating a secured status of the associated item, the controller being configured to
20 generate an item reorder signal in response to detection of a given transponder having crossed the boundary and having item identification data indicating a consumable status of the associated item; and

25 a database for receiving item reorder signals from the controller for generating an electronic shopping list for reordering of items.

2. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the controller is hosted by a personal computer disposed adjacent the boundary.

5 3. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 further comprises an external communications device in electrical communication with the controller for transmitting generated alert signals therefrom.

10 4. The security and reorder system of Claim 3 wherein the external communications device is configured to transmit the generated alert signals via a global computer network.

15 5. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 further comprises an external communications device in electrical communication with the controller for transmitting generated reorder signals therefrom.

20 6. The security and reorder system of Claim 5 wherein the external communications device is configured to transmit the generated reorder signals via a global computer network.

25 7. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the controller is hosted by an external host computer.

30 8. The security and reorder system of Claim 7 further comprises an external communications device in

electrical communication with the transponder communications device for transmitting a signal representative of the item identification data to the controller.

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9. The security and reorder system of Claim 8 wherein the transponder communications device is configured to communicate with the controller via a global computer network.

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10. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the database is hosted by a personal computer disposed adjacent the boundary.

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11. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the database is hosted by an external host computer.

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12. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the database is accessible via a global computer network.

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13. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 further comprises a camera configured to capture an image adjacent the boundary, the camera is in electrical communication with the controller.

14. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 further comprises an alarm disposed adjacent the boundary,

the alarm is in electrical communication with the controller.

15. The security and reorder system of Claim 1
5 wherein the controller is configured to detect a given transponder having crossed the boundary by a failure to receive a response therefrom.

16. The security and reorder system of Claim 1
10 wherein the controller is configured to detect a given transponder having crossed the boundary by receiving a response therefrom.

17. The security and reorder system of Claim 1
15 wherein the transponder communications device includes multiple devices.

18. The security and reorder system of Claim 1
20 wherein the boundary includes multiple boundaries, and the controller is configured to generate the alert signal in response to detection of a given transponder having crossed a selected one of the boundaries.

19. The security and reorder system of Claim 1
25 wherein the boundary includes multiple boundaries, and the controller is configured to generate the item reorder signal in response to detection of a given transponder having crossed a selected one of the boundaries.

20. The security and reorder system of Claim 1 wherein the transponders are passive radio frequency devices.

5 21. The security and reorder system of Claim 20 further comprising a transponder programming device configured to transmit electrical signals to the transponders for updating the item identification data thereof.

10 22. An automated method of securing and reordering items maintained within a boundary, each item having an associated transponder, each transponder being configured to transmit item identification data for indicating a
15 secured status and a consumable status of the associated item, the method comprising the steps of:

 (a) establishing a transponder data link between the transponders and a transponder communications device located adjacent the boundary;

20 (b) electrically interrogating the transponders and receiving the item identification data in response via the transponder data link;

 (c) generating an alert signal in response to detection of a given transponder having crossed the
25 boundary and having item identification data indicating a secured status of the item associated therewith; and

 (d) generating an item reorder signal in response to detection of a given transponder having
30 crossed the boundary and having item identification

data indicating a consumable status of the item associated therewith.

23. The method of Claim 22 wherein step (d) includes
5 transmitting the item reorder signal via a global computer network.

24. The method of Claim 22 further comprises the step
of:

10 (e) generating an electronic shopping list based upon the received item reorder signals.

25. The method of Claim 24 wherein step (e) includes
15 accessing the electronic shopping list via a global computer network.

26. The method of Claim 24 wherein step (e) includes
20 transmitting the electronic shopping list via a global computer network.

27. The method of Claim 22 wherein the boundary
includes multiple boundaries, and step (c) includes
generating the alert signal in response to detection of a
given transponder having crossed a selected one of the
25 boundaries.

28. The method of Claim 22 wherein the boundary
includes multiple boundaries, and step (d) includes
generating the item reorder signal in response to detection

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